

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: July 18, 2013

Meeting No.: 169

Project: Mary Harvin Transformation Center

Phase: Final

Location: 1609 N. Castle St.

PRESENTATION:

Architect Mark Merolla of Benn Cho Holback presented the design modifications that specifically addressed the comments recorded from the approved June 27, 2013 Schematic Design presentation. The following items were specifically addressed:

1. A 6' high aluminum picket fence has been added to the south and west sides of the site
2. A masonry base and pillar frame an illuminated identification sign is added to the parking area entrance
3. Masonry piers are added adjacent to the pedestrian entry gate on N. Federal St.
4. The entrance to the Mary Harvin Transformation Center program area is enhanced with a bracketed canopy and signage.
5. The rear of the building along N. Castle St. has been softened with planting. The fence is extended to the alley.
6. The landowner, Southern Baptist, is negotiating with the owner of the outparcel at the corner of N. Chester and N. Federal Streets about a possible access easement through the parking lot in exchange for abandoning the alley towards the west.
7. Due to site limitations related to grades and setbacks along the northern property line, the architect did not believe that additional landscaping could be accommodated to create separation from the main entry walk and canopy and the adjacent drive aisle.
8. Additional drawings, including building elevations, are provided for review and comment.

COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL:

1. Clarify caliper and species of trees that line the streets. Trees should be as large a caliper as is feasible within budget and planting practice constraints.
2. While the main pedestrian entrance along Federal Street is now marked with masonry piers, the design of the piers is timid and can/should be improved. Add an entry sign or placard that designates the property name and address.
3. Investigate strengthening the fence by adding additional intermediate masonry piers, and strongly mark the corner and terminus.
4. If a locked gate is not permitted across the alley, eliminate the gate entirely. Provide an opening and ending of fencing marked by masonry piers matching those on N. Federal St. The developer will advise the Planning staff on the status of the alley.

5. Balconies are a key leading project feature.
 - a. Develop edge and underside details
 - b. Railing details are critical and need further development
6. The unresolved separation between pedestrians on the entry walk, canopy, and vehicular traffic on entry drive remains unsatisfactory. Consider adding a 12-16" low masonry wall or an 18" planting strip.
7. The proposed design of the canopy over the entrance to the Mary Harvin Transformation Center needs further study.
 - a. As designed, the canopy is a continuous line covering the entry canopy and vestibule (also underwhelming) for the senior housing.
 - b. The brackets as shown seem foreign.
 - c. Consider a canopy that covers the entry doors to the Mary Harvin Transformation Center.
8. The singular name for both the senior housing and the rehabilitation center is institutional, and may have a negative connotation for residents. Consider a separate name for the senior housing.

PANEL ACTION:

The Panel recommends final approval with comments. The Planning Department will work with the developer and the architect, and will review final resolutions with the UDARP panel.

Attending:

Mark Merolla, Samantha Polinik, Brandon Schultz, Phillip Jones – Cho Benn Holback + Assoc.
Andrew Cohen – The Woda Group

Ms. Diane Jones Allen, Messrs. Gary Bowden, Rich Burns and David Haresign* - UDARP Panel

Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Theo Ngongang, Wolde Ararsa, Natasha Becker, Laurie Feinberg - Planning Department